

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MADRID 05635 01 OF 02 281338Z

ACTION EUR-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1179

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 5635

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF PCE INTERNATIONAL SECTION OFFICIAL

SUMMARY: MOHEDANO SEES "NEW TIMES" ATTACK MAKING THE SOVIETS LOOK A LITTLE SILLY, EXPRESSES DISAPPOINTMENT OVER SPOTTINESS OF PCE'S ELECTORAL STRENGTH, AND LABELS THE PSOE "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC." HE BELIEVES PCE WILL SHOW BETTER IN THE COMING MUNICIPALS, BUT VIEWS A REJUVENATION OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AS ESSENTIAL. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A FREE-WHEELING AND POLEMIC-FREE JULY 27 CONVERSATION, JOSE MARIA MOHEDANO, SECOND-LEVEL MEMBER OF THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY'S INTERNATIONAL SECTION AND PCE JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES, MADE THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS TO EMBOFF:

2. THE "NEW TIMES" ATTACK. THE SOVIETS SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER, AND HE HAD TOLD SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN MADRID AS MUCH. THEY HAD SOME YEARS AGO ATTEMPTED TO DIVIDE THE PARTY AND WHIP IT INTO LINE BY SUPPORTING LISTER, AND THAT GAMBIT HAD FAILED MISERABLY. THE NEW ATTACK HAD ONCE AGAIN RALLIED THE PARTY AROUND CARRILLO. ALTHOUGH THERE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 05635 01 OF 02 281338Z

OBTAINING INDIVIDUAL PARTY MEMBERS WHO WERE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THIS SORT OF MANEUVER ON MOSCOW'S PART, THE PARTY IS FUNDAMENTALLY UNITED BEHIND CARRILLO (FOR WHOM MOHEDANO PROFESSED GREAT RESPECT) AND HIS EUROCOMMUNIST APPROACH. MOHEDANO ASSUMED THE "NEW TIMES" MESSAGE WAS INTENDED LARGELY FOR THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS AND, TO SOME EXTENT, FOR THE PCI AND PCF.

3. ELECTION POST-MORTEM. THE PCE HAD PREDICTED IT WOULD WIN ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE AND 20 LOWER HOUSE SEATS, AND IT THEREFORE WAS NOT SURPRISED BY THE ELECTION OUTCOME (IT TOOK ABOUT 9.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND 20 SEATS). BUT THE PARTY WAS DISAPPOINTED BY THE DISTRIBUTION OF ITS STRENGTH, HAVING HOPED FOR A BETTER BALANCED NATIONAL SHOWING. THE CATALAN PSUC HAD PERFORMED BETTER THAN EXPECTED (IT TOOK 8 OF THE PARTY'S 20 SEATS), BUT THE PCE HAD BEEN SHUT OUT IN GALICIA, THE BASQUE PROVINCES, VALLADOLID, AND MURCIA, IN EACH OF WHICH IT HAD HOPED TO COME AWAY WITH AT LEAST ONE DEPUTY.

4. MOHEDANO ATTRIBUTED THE PSUC'S SUCCESSFUL SHOWING TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS: IT HAD BEEN OPERATING RELATIVELY OPENLY FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS, MUCH LONGER THAN THE PARTY HAD BEEN ABLE TO MOVE FREELY IN OTHER REGIONS; IT WAS MORE DEMOCRATIC INTERNALLY, WHICH MEANT IT FUNCTIONED MORE EFFECTIVELY AND HAD A BETTER IMAGE; ITS FIRST-AND SECOND-LEVEL LEADERSHIP WAS OF HIGH QUALITY THAN IN MOST OF THE REST OF SPAIN; AND IT HAD MAINTAINED ITS REGIONAL IDENTITY WITHOUT GOING OVERBOARD ON THE AUTONOMY QUESTION (UNLIKE THE BASQUE COMMUNISTS, FOR INSTANCE, WHO WERE TOO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH MADRID FOR THEIR OWN GOOD). MOHEDANO CONTRASTED THE PSUC'S STRONG POINTS WITH THE DEMONSTRATED WEAKNESS OF THE BASQUE AND GALICIAN ORGANIZATIONS, THEREBY

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PAGE 03 MADRID 05635 01 OF 02 281338Z

IMPLYING THAT BASQUE COMMUNIST CHIEF RAMON ORMAZABAL AND GALICIAN LEADER SANTIAGO ALVAREZ MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE.

5. THE YOUTH MOVEMENT. MOHEDANO CAME DOWN HARD FOR A REJUVENATION OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. WITHOUT NAMING NAMES, HE CATEGORIZED SOME OF THE OLDER LEADERS AS TOO INFLUENCED BY THEIR YEARS IN CLANDESTINITY AND, IN MANY CASES, EXTENDED PRISON TERMS TO BE ABLE EFFECTIVELY TO DEAL WITH SPAIN'S NEW POLITICAL REALITY (NOT TO MENTION THE IMAGE OF SOME OF THEM). THE ELECTION HAD BEEN VERY MUCH A GENERALIZATION CHANGE IN SPANISH POLITICS -- LOOK AT SUAREZ AND GONZALEZ -- AND THE PCE COULD NOT AFFORD TO BE LEFT BEHIND. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE PARTY'S NEED TO CATCH UP IN THIS REGARD, HE POINTED TO ITS ELECTION CAMPAIGN PUBLICITY, WHICH HE SAID (ACCURATELY) WAS GREY, DATED AND UNAPPEALING COMPARED TO THE PSOE'S (MOHEDANO EARLIER HAD EXPRESSED TO AN EMBASSY SOURCE HIS DISPLEASURE WITH THE PARTY'S MADRID PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE FOR ITS HIDEBOUND CONSERVATISM AND APPARENT INABILITY TO KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES; BUT HIS SUPPORT FOR THE INJECTION OF NEW BLOOD INTO THE LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY DOES NOT EXTEND AS FAR AS CARRILLO HIMSELF.)

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PAGE 01 MADRID 05635 02 OF 02 281346Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 5635

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6. THE PCE AND THE PSOE. IN MANY RESPECTS PCE AND PSOE TACTICS ARE VERY SIMILAR. IN FACT, MOHEDANO VOLUNTEERED, THE PCE CURRENTLY IS TACTICALLY MORE MODERATE THAN THE PSOE. BUT HE QUICKLY ADDED THAT THE PCE STANDS FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL TRANSFORMATION OF SPANISH SOCIETY WHILE THE PSOE IS BASICALLY A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, RANDT WILL HAVE MUCH MORE INFLUENCE ON FELIPE GONZALEZ THAN MITTERAND WILL. WHILE SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PSOE BASE CLEARLY ARE QUITE RADICAL, THEY DO NOT COUNT FOR MUCH BECAUSE WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, GONZALEZ AND HIS LEADERSHIP CALL THE SHOTS ("INTERNALLY THE PSOE IS NO MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN WE ARE"). MOHEDANO WOULD NOT BE PINNED DOWN ON POSSIBLE FUTURE COLLABORATION WITH THE PSOE, AND HE SEEMED TO RECIPROCATATE THE PSOE LEADERSHIP'S SUSPICIONS OF THE PCE (EVEN THOUGH HE SHARES A LAW OFFICE WITH AND APPEARS VERY CLOSE TO PSOE NOTABLE GREGORIO PECES BARBA).

7. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE GOVT'S PROGRAM WILL NOT SUCCEED. BY MID-1978 RESERVES WILL BE DEPLETED AND "THE IMF WILL HAVE TO COME IN TO PUT THE HOUSE IN ORDER." THE WORKERS' COMMISSIONS DO NOT VIEW THE QUID OF FISCAL REFORM AS SUFFICIENT FOR THEM TO SHOULDER THE BURDEN PLACED ON LABOR BY THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM. NOR DOES HE BELIEVE THE

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PAGE 02 MADRID 05635 02 OF 02 281346Z

SOCIALSIT UGT WILL BE WILLING TO DO SO, IF ONLY BECAUSE OF THE WORKERS' COMMISSIONS-UGT COMPETITION FOR LABOR SUPPORT. ACCORDING TO MOHEDANO, THE GOVT HAD OFFERED THE PCE POSITIONS UP TO UNDERSECRETARY IN "THE MOST CONFLICTIVE MINISTRIES," BUT THE PARTY HAD NO INTENTION OF RISING TO THE BAIT.

8. LOOKING AHEAD. THE PARTY ALREADY IS PREPARING FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, WHERE IT BELIEVES THE LEFT GENERALLY AND THE COMMUNISTS IN PARTICULAR WILL EXCEED THEIR JUNE 15 ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE. THE PCE HOPES TO SECURE FROM THE CORTES A MUNICIPAL ELECTION LAW WHICH WILL NOT PENALIZE THE MINORITY PARTIES AS THE NATIONAL LAW CLEARLY HAS DONE. BUT MOHEDANO FORESAW A PSOE-UCD EFFORT TO RAM THROUGH A LAW WHICH WOULD PERPETUATE THE EXISTING PREPONDERANCE OF THOSE TWO PARTIES. HE THOUGHT THE GOVT COULD COUNT ON JOSE LUIS ALVAREZ, RAFAEL ARIAS SALGADO, MIGUEL HERRERO DE MINON, AND JOSE PEDRO PEREZ LLORCA -- ALL "CAPABLE AND SERIOUS MEN" -- TO DRAFT A UCD-FAVORING MUNICIPAL LAW.

9. THE US AND EUROCOMMUNISM, PREDICTABLY, MOHEDANO EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN THE USG'S VIEW OF EUROCOMMUNISM. EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT IT WAS A PHENOMENON WHICH WE WOULD CONTINUE TO STUDY CLOSELY AND CAREFULLY. TWO FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE EVALUATION OBVIOUSLY WOULD BE EUROCOMMUNISM'S DEMONSTRATED -- AND NOT JUST RHETORICAL -- INDEPENDENCE OF MOSCOW, AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS SUCH FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS AS INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES, POLITICAL PLURALISM, AND ALTERNATION IN POWER.

10. COMMENT. EARLY IN THE CONVERSATION, MOHEDANO REMARKED POINTEDLY THAT HE "THOUGHT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME ANYONE FROM CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MADRID 05635 02 OF 02 281346Z

THE EMBASSY HAD LUNCHEDED WITH ANYONE FROM THE PARTY." EMBOFF, WHO RESPONDED SIMPLY THAT HE MIGHT INDEED BE RIGHT, WAS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT MOHEDANO HAD CLEARED THIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. HE DID NOT RETURN TO THE SUBJECT OF CONTACTS DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE MORE THAN TWO HOUR CONVERSATION.

11. ALTHOUGH MUCH OF HIS PRESENTATION CLEARLY WAS SELF-SERVING, HIS OPENNESS AND CANDOR, UP TO A POINT, ARE QUITE REMARKABLE. HE IS INVOLVED IN A WIDE RANGE OF PARTY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION, WHERE HE DEALS WITH THE SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN EMBASSIES IN MADRID, LEGAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PARTY IN ITS NOW RESOLVED CHALLENGES OF THE MADRID ELECTION RESULTS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL WORK FOR THE COMING MUNICIPALS. HE ALSO IS

ONE OF THE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE YOUNG LAWYERS GROUP WHICH IS PRESSING FOR MORE INTERNAL DEMOCRACY IN THE PARTY AND WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL DRAFTERS OF THE SO-CALLED "LAWYERS DOCUMENT" WHICH CALLED IN MARCH FOR GREATER INTERNAL PCE DEMOCRACY (MADRID 2622). EVEN SO, MOHEDANO CONSIDERS HIMSELF TO BE ON THE LEFT OF THE PARTY IN TERMS OF PROGRAM, AND REPORTEDLY IDENTIFIES WITH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER SIMON SANCHEZ MONTERO. STABLER

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